



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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#### **Public Affairs**

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### **Four South Korean Nationals Indicted for Conspiring to Sell Approximately \$1 Million in Counterfeit United States Currency**

**Washington, D.C.** - Four South Korean nationals - Park Jong-Suk, 63, Kim Yong-Tae, 51, Lee Jae-Kwon, 54, and An Wi-Joon, 49 - were indicted by a federal grand jury in Washington, D.C. for attempting to sell approximately one million dollars in highly deceptive counterfeit \$100 United States Federal Reserve Notes (FRNs), commonly known as "Supernotes," announced Acting U.S. Attorney Channing D. Phillips, Assistant Director Michael Merritt, U.S. Secret Service's Office of Investigations, and Special Agent in Charge Albert Joaquin, United States Secret Service, Honolulu Field Office. The two-count indictment charges the defendants with conspiring to and committing counterfeiting acts outside the United States. If convicted, the defendants face a maximum term of imprisonment of twenty-five years, a fine of \$500,000, or both.

The indictment alleges that in October 2008 defendants Park and Lee traveled separately from Seoul, South Korea, to Dalian, China. Defendant Park met with an individual in China, and Park agreed to accept a package from the individual in South Korea. At the same time, defendant Lee met with an individual in China who provided him with samples of high quality counterfeit \$100 FRNs and asked him to find a purchaser in South Korea. Park and Lee then returned to South Korea separately.

Thereafter, Park received a package from an individual in Seoul, South Korea, through his Chinese contact, that contained approximately one million dollars in counterfeit currency. Meanwhile, Lee contacted defendant An in Busan, South Korea, provided a sample of the counterfeit money, and asked him to find a purchaser for the bills.

On November 3, 2008, defendant An approached a money exchanger in Busan, South Korea, provided the sample counterfeit bill, and asked if the money exchanger could find a buyer for one million dollars of the counterfeit currency. Later that day, Park was instructed via a mobile phone call from Dalian, China, to immediately meet with a co-conspirator known as "the Dalian Brother" and travel with him and the counterfeit money to Busan. Park and the "Dalian

Brother” met that day, and then contacted defendant Kim and asked him to drive them to Busan. Defendant Kim agreed, bringing a gas gun for protection. On the evening of November 3, 2008, Park, Kim, Lee, and An met the Busan money exchanger at the New Sunnam Hotel in Busan. They showed him approximately one million dollars in counterfeit bills and then negotiated a price for the sale of the false currency.

As the money exchanger left the location to obtain payment, the Busan Metropolitan Police (“BMP”) moved in and arrested Park, Kim and An. Lee and the “Dalian Brother” fled the scene and were able to escape. Lee later surrendered to the BMP; the “Dalian Brother” remains at large.

During the operation, the BMP seized 9,904 counterfeit \$100 FRNs and the gas gun from a hotel room occupied by Park and Kim. The seizure represents the largest single seizure of this particular type of high quality counterfeit currency to date. All of the co-defendants currently remain outside of the United States.

“This case represents the U.S. government’s continuing effort to disrupt and dismantle worldwide criminal networks that are engaged in transactions involving highly deceptive counterfeit U.S. currency,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Phillips. “We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to aggressively pursue counterfeiters wherever they exist, both here and abroad.”

"Today's indictments demonstrate that the Secret Service remains committed to aggressively investigating those who choose to counterfeit U.S. currency anywhere in the world" said Assistant Director Michael Merritt of the U.S. Secret Service's Office of Investigations. "Multinational cases of this magnitude are only successfully investigated by working closely with our domestic and international law enforcement partners. The indictments in this case will undoubtedly have a significant impact by reducing the amount of foreign manufactured counterfeit U.S. currency in circulation."

The indictment was obtained through the committed efforts of the United States Secret Service Headquarters Criminal Investigative Division and the Honolulu Field Office. Special thanks are extended to the Busan Metropolitan Police and the Busan Prosecutor’s Office in Busan, South Korea for their invaluable assistance. The prosecution is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Brenda J. Johnson and Michael C. DiLorenzo of the National Security Section of the D.C. U.S. Attorney’s Office.

The public is reminded that a criminal indictment contains mere allegations and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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